



STATE OF WISCONSIN

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Winter Weather Dangers

Important safety tips for the days ahead

(MADISON) – 2013 is going out with an arctic blast as bitter cold temperatures will cover the Badger State in the days ahead. Here's the latest information on weather conditions and tips to keep you and your family safe.

Bitter temperatures – Arctic air will move in creating dangerously cold wind chills. Temperatures will fall into the single digits today in Northwest Wisconsin and the rest of the state tomorrow. Bitterly cold overnight wind chill readings of 20 to 35 below zero should be widespread across the state from Sunday evening into the morning hours on Tuesday. The rest of the week will also be below normal for temperatures.

On the road - If you are traveling make sure you have a winter emergency kit in your vehicle. Items to include in the kit are candles and matches, a flashlight, pocket knife, snacks, a cell phone adapter, a blanket and extra clothing. For a complete list go to <http://ReadyWisconsin.wi.gov>

Health Risks - With wind chills of -20 to -35, there is an increased risk of frostbite and hypothermia. If you must venture outdoors, make sure you wear a hat and gloves. Frostbite can happen in less than 30 minutes of exposure to those conditions. Symptoms include a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in fingers, toes, ear tips and tip of the nose. Limit your time outside. If you see these signs, seek medical care immediately.

Hypothermia is also a danger in these conditions. That is when your body temperature drops below 95°F. Warning signs include uncontrollable shivering, disorientation, slurred speech and drowsiness. Again, limit your outdoor activity and seek medical care if you detect these symptoms.

Carbon Monoxide Danger - Carbon monoxide is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control. More than 20,000 people visit the emergency room and nearly 500 are killed each year from carbon monoxide poisoning.

Make sure you have working CO detectors. All homes and duplexes in Wisconsin are required to have CO detectors on every level including the basement, but not the attic or storage areas.

Have your furnace or wood-burning stove inspected annually to make sure it is structurally and functionally sound and vents properly to the outside of your home.

Never run a gasoline or propane heater or a grill (gas or charcoal) inside your home or an unventilated garage. Any heating system that burns fuel will produce carbon monoxide. Use a battery-powered detector where you have fuel burning devices but no electric outlets, such as in tents, cabins, RVs, and boats with enclosed cabins.

Never run a car in an enclosed space. If a vehicle is running, you must have a door open to the outside.

Generators should be run a safe distance from the home. Never run a generator in the home or garage, or right next to windows or doors.

Breathing carbon monoxide displaces the oxygen in the blood and can cause death within minutes at high levels. Symptoms of overexposure to carbon monoxide are often mistaken for the flu and include headaches, fatigue, dizziness, shortness of breath/chest pain, nausea/vomiting, and confusion. If you experience any of these symptoms, or your carbon monoxide detector sounds an alarm, head outside immediately for fresh air and call 911.

Pet care - While our pets might seem to have built-in, warm winter coats, they too are sensitive to the elements. It is recommended to bring them indoors during this bitter weather. Dogs and cats can get frost bitten ears, nose and feet if left outside during bitter cold weather. Chemicals used to melt snow and ice can also irritate pets' paws - be sure to keep anti-freeze, salt and other poisons away from pets.

For additional safety tips, visit <http://ReadyWisconsin.wi.gov>. You can also check out Midwest road conditions and airport delays. Follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/ReadyWisconsin) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/ReadyWisconsin).